(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the marketing heads of oil PSUs have been asked to submit the guidelines to the Ministry before they are implemented;

(d) if so, what steps Government propose to take to see that the reservation of weaker sections, freedom fighters and widows is adhered to; and

(e) what are the other conditions impsoed on these dealers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) to (e) Consequent upon the dismantling of the Administered Pricing Mechanism in the petroleum sector with effect from 1.4.2002, the selection of dealers/distributors for retail outlets (petrol pumps) and LPG distributorships at different locations in the country, will be made by the oil marketing companies (OMCs) themselves as per the guidelines to be adopted by them. Preliminary action like selection of suitable sites for setting up of retail outlets/LPG distributorships, etc., has been initiated by the OMCs.

Availability of two varieties of petrol

2738. SHRI DARA SINGH CHAUHAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that two types of petrol are available at the petrol pumps;

(b) if so, what is the rationale behind introducing two types of petrol in the retail outlet; and

(c) whether Government propose to maintain uniform standard as far as petrol is considered to keep the pollution level low?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Under Administered Pricing Mechanism, the concept of branded fuel was non existent except for selling of higher octane fuel. With the opening up of market and private sector being allowed to market POL products, in order to face the expected increased

competition, Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) introduced branding of POL products, for ensuring customer loyalty. Therefore, premium petrol obtained by adding additives to normal petrol at the supply location under different names was introduced by Oil Companies offering various advantages to the customers such as improving performance of the engine of their vehicle.

(c) The Government always encourages oil companies to upgrade products and services so as to benefit consumers. The introduction of premium grade petrol by oil companies is one such initiative that will benefit consumers as well as reduce vehicular pollution, thereby helping to conserve the environment.

Agreement on distribution of petroleum products

†2739. SHRI BASHISHTHA NARAIN SINGH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the names of private companies besides public undertakings with which agreements for distribution/sale of petro-products have been made indicating the time period of these contracts;

(b) whether providing sale facility to private companies neglecting Government undertakings is justified; if not, the reasons therefore; and

(c) whether Government propose to reconsider the said agreement for giving preference to Government undertakings and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) to (c) Government have granted authorization to market the transportation fuels in respect of four companies namely, M/s. Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC), M/s. Numaligarh Refinery Limited (NRL), M/s. Reliance Industries Limtied (RIL) and M/s. Essar Oil Limited (EOL). These companies will set up Retail Outlets for sale of Motor Spirit (MS) and Highspeed Diesel (HSD) as per their commercial consideration and no time limit has been set up by the Government while granting authorization. Consequent upon the dismantling of

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.